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1961/04/13

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MEMORANDUM FOR: General Maxwell D. Taylor

1. Following is the text of a precedence EMERGENCY cable sent to Project chief: at Puerto Cabezas on 13 April 1961 by the

(a) Please advise EMERGENCY precedence if your experiences during the last few days have in any way changed your evaluation of the Brigade.

(b) For your information: The President has stated that under no conditions will U. S. intervene with any U. S. forces.

2. Following is the text of Hawkins reply of the same day:

(a) My observations the last few days have increased my confidence in the ability of this force to accomplish not only initial combat missions but also the ultimate objective of Castro's overthrow.

(b) Reference (Paragraph 1 above) arrived during the final briefing of the Brigade and Battalion commanders. They now know all details of the plan and are enthusiastic. These officers are young, vigorous, intelligent and motivated with a fanatical urge to begin battle for which most of them have been preparing in the rugged conditions of training camps for almost a year. I have talked to many of them in their language. Without exception, they have utmost confidence in their ability to win. They say they know their own people and believe after they have inflicted one serious defeat upon opposing forces, the latter will melt away from Castro, who they have no wish to support. They say it is Cuban tradition to join a winner and they have supreme confidence they will win all engagements against the best Castro has to offer. I share their confidence.

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(c) The Brigade is well organized and is more heavily armed and better equipped in some respects than U. S. infantry units. The men have received intensive training in the use of their weapons, including more firing experience than U. S. troops would normally receive. I was impressed with the serious attitude of the men as they arrived here and moved to their ships. Movements were quiet, disciplined and efficient, and the embarkation was accomplished with remarkable smoothness.

(d) The Brigade now numbers 1,400; a truly formidable force.

(e) I have also carefully observed the Cuban Air Force. The aircraft are kept with pride and some of the B-26 crews are so eager to commence contemplated operations that they have already armed their aircraft. _____ informed me today that he considers the B-26 squadron equal to the best U. S. Air Force squadron.

(f) The Brigade officers do not expect help from U. S. Armed Forces. They ask only for continued delivery of supplies. This can be done covertly.

(g) This Cuban Air Force is motivated, strong, well trained, armed to the teeth, and ready. I believe profoundly that it would be a serious mistake for the United States to deter it from its intended purpose.

Distribution:

- Copy #1 - General Taylor
- Copy #2 - Mr. Allen W. Dulles
- Copy #3 - Mr. Richard M. Bissell, Jr.
- Copy #4
- Copy #5

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